

**Public Health Committee
Public Hearing
March 5, 2007**

**Testimony of Jess Morales Ruan
Volunteer, VITAS Innovative Hospice Care**

My name is Jess Morales Ruan. I am a hospice volunteer, and I am here this morning to testify in support of Raised Bill No. 7193 which recognizes a state regulatory scheme for hospice-only providers in the State of Connecticut.

Following the Federal Medicare guidelines, VITAS Innovative Hospice Care is committed to helping keep the community involved in the care of patients who are facing life limiting illnesses. Volunteers are that presence in the homes of the patients, at the bedside of those we serve. Volunteers give from their heart, sharing on a special level in this experience by being involved with social visits, wrapping their hand made blankets around the shoulders of patients or elderly spouses, cooking homemade meals, and reaching out with pet therapies, sharing their loved pets with our patients and their families. The message to our patients is that you are not alone, making sure that they know that they are cared for. Social isolation can be another part of the pain patients and their families experience when facing death, and volunteers go that extra mile to make sure our patients are not alone. I am glad that you recognize the importance of caring for the dying patients, taking the time to let us talk. Do you have any questions for me?